

Adequate Yearly Progress Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the No Child Left Behind Act?

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was first passed in 1965, becoming the U.S. Department of Education's primary funding vehicle for providing resources to the nation's schools. Since 1965, the "Act" has been modified and reauthorized. "No Child Left Behind" is the name President Bush gave to the Act passed by Congress in 2001 and signed into law by the President on January 8, 2002.

2. What does it require of schools?

The centerpiece of the Act is a requirement that public schools have 100% of students performing academically at grade level by the spring of 2014.

3. How are students measured?

Schools are required to meet 41 benchmarks for student achievement under No Child Left Behind. A school's adequate yearly progress is calculated based on test participation, academic achievement, graduation rate and other statistics. But every few years, the percentage of students who must pass state tests increases. Nationwide, millions of children are still a long way from reaching the law's ambitious goal — that every student, 100%, be able to read and do math at their grade level by the year 2014.

Each school's enrollment is divided into 10 specific student groups along lines of race, family income, limited English proficiency and students with disabilities. In addition, a minimum of 95% of students must take the tests.

Each student group must contain at least 30 students over three years to be measured for progress in reading and math. A school meets the No Child Left Behind standard only if each of the 10 student groups make the academic progress necessary to get 100% of students at grade level by 2014. If any student group does not meet the required progress level in either subject, the whole school does not meet the federal standard.

4. How do Montana students score on other measurements of academic achievement?

Student test scores have shown a marked increase over the past seven years.

Percentage of Students at or above "proficient" in Reading and Math 2003-2010		
	Reading	Math
2003-2004	62	57
2004-2005	68	59
2005-2006	78	61
2006-2007	81	63
2007-2008	81	63
2008-2009	82	64
2009-2010	84	67

[Source: Montana criterion-referenced test scores, MontCAS]

Academic growth is confirmed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (known as the Nation's Report card), the Education Trust, and the state's ACT scores.

According to 'The Nation's Report Card' in 2009, only two states scored higher than Montana eighth graders in math and reading. In math, only Minnesota outscored Montana, and in reading, only Vermont did. Massachusetts was the only state that outscored Montana in both math and reading in 2009 for Grade 8.

Montana has been recognized by the Education Trust for increasing student achievement in reading and math for both American Indian and White students over the past six years. Montana was also one of six states recognized for achieving significant progress toward closing the achievement gap between low-income students and their peers.

The state can point to gaps between low-income students and higher-income students that are among the smallest in the nation, and ACT scores that consistently best the national average.

5. What are the sanctions for schools that use Title I money?

Schools using Title I money that fail to meet the federal standard for two consecutive years must offer all students the choice to transfer to another public school in the district. Schools that fail to meet the standards for three consecutive years must also offer extra tutoring or similar services to low-income students who are below grade level.

6. Where can people find more about the No Child Left Behind Act?

An overview of the No Child Left Behind Act can be found at <http://www.nclb.gov/>

7. Where can people find more information about Montana schools?

The NCLB report card can be found at http://opi.mt.gov/Reports&Data/Index.html?gpm=1_3

More information on Montana's schools can be found at www.opi.mt.gov